

Bylaw Review Committee 02/05/2020 Minutes

Attendees:

Mary McGurn (MM)

Jenn Frederick (JF)

Eileen Vining (EV)

Richard Allen - Guest (RA)

Chet Delaney - Guest (CD)

Called to order by Vice-Chair Mary McGurn at 5:34 p.m.

Minutes from the last meeting discussed, and all were approved except for the first bullet point on the section Review Bylaw 1.

Membership

- Committee Reorganization
 - Motion passes appoint Mary McGurn as chairman and Jenn Frederick as Secretary and Treasurer

Review of Bylaw 1 Continued: Notes on Bylaw 1 (by MM)

Note 1: Regarding the Posting of Warrants

Should the town mail the Warrants out in advance?

- Consensus of committee and guests to that this requires more discussion about how the town communicates. Mailing of Warrants in advance could impose an extra burden on the Selectboard.
- However, a possible compromise might be to mail a reminder that tells people to visit the website to view the warrant.

Note 2: Proposed addition to Bylaw 1.4.3 regarding secret ballot motions

“If a Motion to raise or appropriate monies in excess of the appropriation recommended by the Finance Committee for the current year, or to raise or appropriate monies to expend for a purpose not customarily made occurs, the Moderator can ask for a show of hands for those desiring a secret written ballot with 20 (more?) dictating such action (GB Bylaw)”

- Committee does not accept the proposed addition
- Committee agrees to research secret ballots; assigned to EV

Note 3: New proposed bylaw specifying the process for calling or requesting a special town meeting

“The Selectboard shall schedule a special town meeting upon written request of two hundred (200) registered voters or 20% of the total number of registered voters, whichever is less in number. Voters must include their signatures and physical addresses. The Special Town Meeting must be held no later than 45 days after the Selectmen receive the request.”

- Motion for new bylaw as written above passes.

Note 4: New proposed bylaw regarding timing of Warrant submission by citizens

“To be included in the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting of any year, articles must be presented to the Selectmen not later than 10 March of that year. (timing for Special Town Meetings – 30 days?)”

- This proposed new bylaw is tabled pending research; research assigned to RA
 - Research will help clarify how/why the citizens’ articles have different timing requirements compared to a Selectboard article, which is brought by a committee or board.

Note 5: New proposed bylaw regarding how citizens may petition to place articles on Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting warrants

“Egremont voters may place articles on a warrant before the Selectmen close the warrant for any Town Meeting. To insert an article in the warrant for an Annual Town Meeting, at least ten (10) registered voters must sign a written request. To place articles on a warrant for a Special Town Meeting, one hundred (100) registered voters or 10% of the total number of voters, whichever is lesser, may do so.”

- This proposed new bylaw is tabled pending research.
- Comments on the proposed bylaw
 - MM used wording from “Citizen’s Guide to Town Meetings” published by Willam Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth.
 - Possibly use the term “Citizen’s Article” in lieu of Citizens Petition (modeled after form from Great Barrington).

Review of Bylaw 2 (MM)

Committee agrees to look into moving 2.1 to the Finance Committee section; research assigned to RA

Running List of Terms to Standardize

Committee agrees to create a running list of terms to be standardized throughout the Bylaws

1. voter/registered voter/ legal voter (EV assigned research)
2. property tax payer/ resident
3. selectmen/ selectboard/Board of Selectmen
4. Town Meetings (annual, open, special, capitalized, lowercase)

Adjourned at 7:14 pm